

COVID INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS WITH UPCOMING SURGERY OR PROCEDURE

How has UCSF determined that it is now safe to be scheduling surgeries or procedures?

During our COVID pandemic response period, UCSF Health has continued to perform essential surgeries and procedures for patients in whom a delay could cause harm to the patient. We have been weighing the risk of delay against the benefit that can be achieved by moving forward with the care plan on an ongoing basis for all planned surgeries and procedures. This evaluation has been done as a team between experts in caring for patients with complex health conditions and experts in infection prevention and control. Our medical and surgical teams have taken measures to help ensure the safety of all patients at UCSF Health. We have not had any in-hospital transmission of COVID-19 which we think is a reassuring sign that having a procedure performed now at UCSF can be done safely.

Will I be safe in the hospital if UCSF Health is treating proven or suspected COVID-19 patients?

Our infection prevention practices and protocols are aimed at protecting our faculty, providers and staff, as well as other patients and visitors.

Everyone, including employees and visitors entering our hospitals and clinics, will be screened for symptoms and known high-risk exposures. Everyone will be offered a mask to wear as a way to contain their respiratory secretions and to prevent spread of infection to others.

Across the UCSF Health campus, we have rooms that can be used to safely isolate and care for patients with COVID-19. We also have the ability to adapt additional rooms and hospital areas to care for larger numbers of patients if needed.

Can I continue to obtain medical and surgical care while shelter-in-place is in effect?

The current shelter-in-place order allows people to seek care. In the rare situation where you may be stopped and asked for proof of your visit, your clinical team can provide you with an appointment letter via MyChart or the mail.

UCSF Health and your providers are able to offer telehealth visits for times when you can interact with your provider via video and receive management recommendations without coming into the clinic. Video visits are for routine, non-urgent medical visits. The first step to setting this up is to activate your MyChart account and call your provider's clinic to set up the visit.

If your clinical team has been in contact with you regarding scheduling your surgery, it's been determined that the benefits of proceeding with your procedure outweigh the risks of coming to UCSF even while shelter-in-place is in effect. Medical and surgical care are considered essential needs and you should be able to come to UCSF for care.

How does COVID affect my recovery from surgery?

We want to perform your surgery or procedure in the safest possible circumstances. One of our healthcare members will reach out ahead of time to ask you about possible symptoms of COVID-19 to ensure that we are not performing any surgery or procedure at a time when you are sick. Even if you do not show any symptoms of the virus, we will be scheduling patients for coronavirus testing in the days leading up to their procedure to be even more confident that they are unlikely to undergo a procedure with possible coronavirus infection present. We are doing this as a precautionary measure so that we have all of the information we need to provide you with an ideal care experience and promote a smooth recovery.

Please let us know if you have had close exposure to someone who is known or suspected to have COVID-19 (such as a household member or caregiver), as we may need to adjust our plans to reflect this.

Can my family or friends come to the hospital on the day of surgery, or to visit me in general?

UCSF Health teams are working around the clock to stay on top of the evolving COVID-19 situation to ensure both excellent patient care as well as family and visitor safety.

Under the authority of City and County of San Francisco Health Officer Order No. C19-06, UCSF Health is restricting visitors in all of our hospital and clinic facilities until the transmission of COVID-19 is no longer a threat. At the current time, patients are not allowed to have visitors while in the hospital or clinic.

There are some important exceptions to visitor restriction, including:

- Family members of patients who are in comfort care/hospice care.
- Visits by anyone who is legally authorized to make decisions for the patient, whether by operation of a DPOA (durable power of attorney) or conservatorship, or a surrogate decision maker as recognized by the provider team for patients who lack decisional capacity.
- Support persons for patients with developmental disabilities, physical disabilities/limitations or cognitive impairment who require assistance.
- Support persons for patients who have delirium and/or dementia where the presence of the visitor is necessary to reduce the patient's delirium, reduce the risk of falls or other injury and otherwise reduce the risk of medical or clinical harm.
- Visits by family and legal advisors to update a patient's will or other legal papers.
- Evaluations for transplant that require a patient to bring a caregiver or other support person.
- For pediatrics: All patients with an appointment in a pediatric clinic or pediatric infusion center.
- For Orthopedic Institute Surgery Center: All surgical patients may be accompanied by a caregiver or support person who is their source of transportation.
- Unique situations that may arise where the visitor's necessity should be discussed with the on-site manager.

In all cases above, support persons/visitors must be screened for symptoms of COVID-19; those screening positive will not be permitted to visit, and will be given explanatory material, including instructions on hygiene and social distancing and a recommendation to seek care from their primary provider.

All support persons/visitors who are allowed under these exceptions will receive a “Visiting Responsibility” instruction sheet, including direction on handwashing, social distancing, other infection prevention measures and limitations on movement within the ambulatory care facility.

Please see our current Visitor Policy here: <https://www.ucsfhealth.org/for-visitors/visitor-restrictions-due-to-coronavirus>

We will coordinate with your support persons your drop-off and pick up before and after your surgery or procedure.

Does the current COVID situation change my length of stay after my surgery or procedure?

While we think that coming to the hospital for your surgery or procedure is safe, we also believe that minimizing your length of stay after surgery will help further reduce your risk of exposure to COVID-19. Your clinical teams are working with you to anticipate any post-surgical and post-procedural needs you might have, including a ride home, support during your recovery, and a place to go to after your procedure. Our goal is to keep you in the hospital until your health is strong enough for you to leave the hospital safely while ensuring that your post-procedural length of stay is the minimum length necessary to reduce your exposure risk to any virus. If you have issues that need to be addressed prior to your surgery or procedure to ensure a smooth transition out of the hospital afterward, please raise them with your care team before coming to the hospital.

Does surgery make me more likely to get COVID?

No, having a surgery or procedure does not increase your chances of developing COVID-19. Our infection prevention practices and protocols are aimed at protecting our patients, providers and staff. Everyone, including employees and visitors entering our hospitals and clinics, will be screened for symptoms and known high-risk exposures. Everyone will be offered a mask to wear as a way to contain their respiratory secretions and to prevent spread of infection to others. Patients who are known to be infected with COVID-19 are kept in special isolation to protect other patients, providers and staff.

Can I post-pone my surgery until the COVID-19 crisis is over?

With any planned surgery or procedure, we must weigh the risk of delay with the benefit that can be achieved by moving forward with your surgery. In some situations, it may not be safe to delay further. Additionally, UCSF Health as well as health systems nationwide will likely continue to be affected by COVID-19 for many months to come.

We have expertise in caring for patients with complex health conditions, and in infection prevention and control. Your surgeon and their team are working hard to assess whether your

surgery can be safely postponed. If they have contacted you to schedule your surgery, they believe that the benefits of moving forward with your surgery outweigh the risks of coming to the hospital. If you are wondering if your surgery can be postponed until after the COVID-19 crisis is over, asking your surgeon directly is a good way to engage in a discussion on whether this can be done safely. Our medical and surgical teams have taken measures to help ensure the safety of all patients at UCSF Health, and we have not had any in-hospital transmission of COVID-19.